



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Spencer Gross, 241-4584

April 3, 2009

Advisory Board Requests Initiation of Consultation Meetings Related to Historic Properties

With the approval of a program to add more than 200 facilities to the environmental cleanup of the Oak Ridge Reservation, the Department of Energy (DOE) Oak Ridge Office needs to engage the public right away in determining if any of those facilities have historical significance. The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) recommended that approach at its March meeting.

ORSSAB is a federally appointed citizens' panel charged with providing advice and recommendations to the DOE Oak Ridge Environmental Management program on its cleanup of contaminated land, groundwater, and facilities on the reservation.

The Integrated Facility Disposition Program (IFDP) is a plan to add 222 additional structures at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Y-12 National Security Complex to the current cleanup effort. The facilities have been identified as excess to mission needs. They are also standing in the way of new development at Y-12 and the laboratory, and many of them sit atop contaminated soil that needs remediation for environmental protection. Parts of the project could begin as early as this fall.

But there is a concern that some of the facilities may have historical significance and demolition shouldn't begin until such a determination is made.

The National Historic Preservation Act provides for the preservation of historic properties throughout the nation. Section 106 of the act calls for a consultation process for federal and state agencies to identify historic properties that could be impacted by an undertaking such as the IFDP.

When DOE Headquarters approved the mission need statement for IFDP in July 2007, the DOE Oak Ridge Office invited the Tennessee Historic Preservation Office to participate in the early planning, thus initiating the consultation process. DOE Oak Ridge also identified ORSSAB, the Local Oversight Committee, the City of Oak Ridge and the Oak Ridge Heritage and Preservation Association as consulting parties.

In its recommendation, ORSSAB said DOE Oak Ridge should initiate consultation meetings with stakeholders immediately to allow early public input into the planning for IFDP. The board went on to say that the process for consultation needs to be clearly defined and agreed to by stakeholders. DOE should initiate the process of gaining public input regarding a range of alternatives, developing the consultation process, and identifying priorities for cultural preservation associated with the IFDP.

ORSSAB has asked for a response from DOE or the initiation of a consulting party meeting by June.

ORSSAB meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. at the DOE Information Center, 475 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Oak Ridge. The meetings are open to the public. For information, call (865) 241-4583 or 241-4584, or see www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab.